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Immediate Release

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Free Water Testing for Corrales Well Users

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) will conduct a door-to-door Water Fair to test private wells in Corrales on November 17-18, 2005. The testing is part of an assessment of groundwater quality throughout New Mexico.

“Corrales has all the ingredients for potentially widespread groundwater contamination - small lots with on-site wells and septic systems that sit on top of a shallow aquifer,” NMED Secretary Ron Curry said. “Septic tanks are the biggest source of groundwater contamination in the state and 90 percent of all drinking water comes from groundwater, so it is imperative that we identify potential issues before they become a problem.”

There is no charge for the testing, and participation is voluntary. Tests will include any or all of the following: pH, electrical conductivity, dissolved oxygen, nitrate, fluoride, iron, and organic vapor. Participants will be provided with the test results and will have an opportunity to discuss the results with a NMED specialist.

Previous testing by NMED and other agencies has detected anoxic contamination in shallow wells in the Corrales area. Anoxic contamination can occur naturally and can be worsened by septic tank effluents. This contamination is characterized by the presence of iron, manganese and/or hydrogen sulfide gas, but with very low nitrate levels. For more information about anoxic contamination, see the NMED website, http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/gwb/Technical_resources/anoxic.html.

Anyone wishing to have their well water tested, should contact Yvonne Romero at yvonne.romero@state.nm.us, at 505-476-8602, or toll-free at 1-800-219-6157. Participants do not have to be at home on the day of testing, and may authorize NMED to collect a sample from an outside faucet and to determine wellhead coordinates with a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit.

Water supplied by public drinking water systems will not be tested, since those supplies are routinely tested pursuant to the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Anyone supplied by a public system should receive a Consumer Confidence Report each year from the system operator that summarizes test results. For additional information on public drinking water systems, contact Chuck Thomas at 505-222-9595.

For further information contact Dennis McQuillan, Field Operations Manager, at (505) 476-8607.

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